

THE GRAMSCI MONUMENT

NEWSPAPER



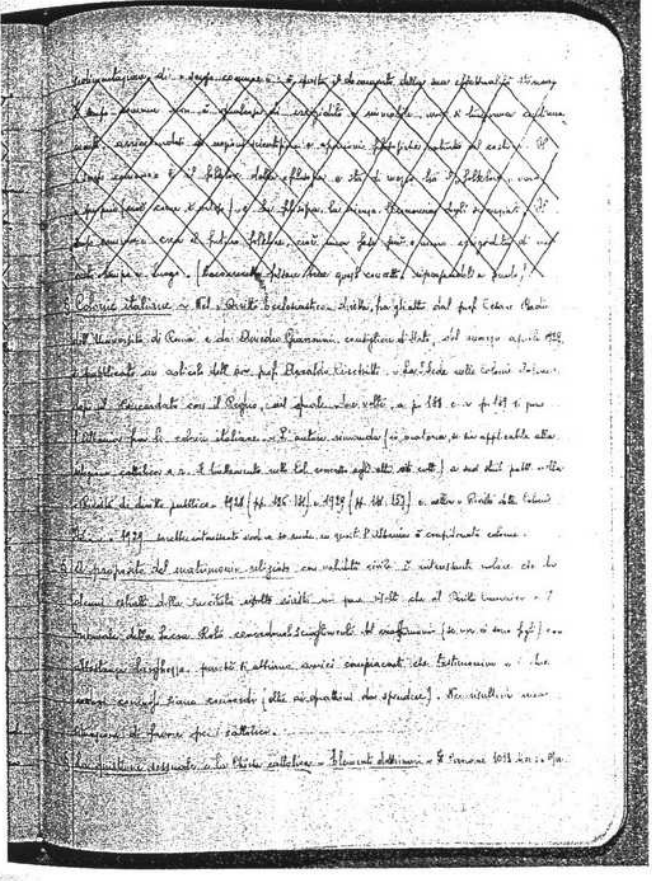
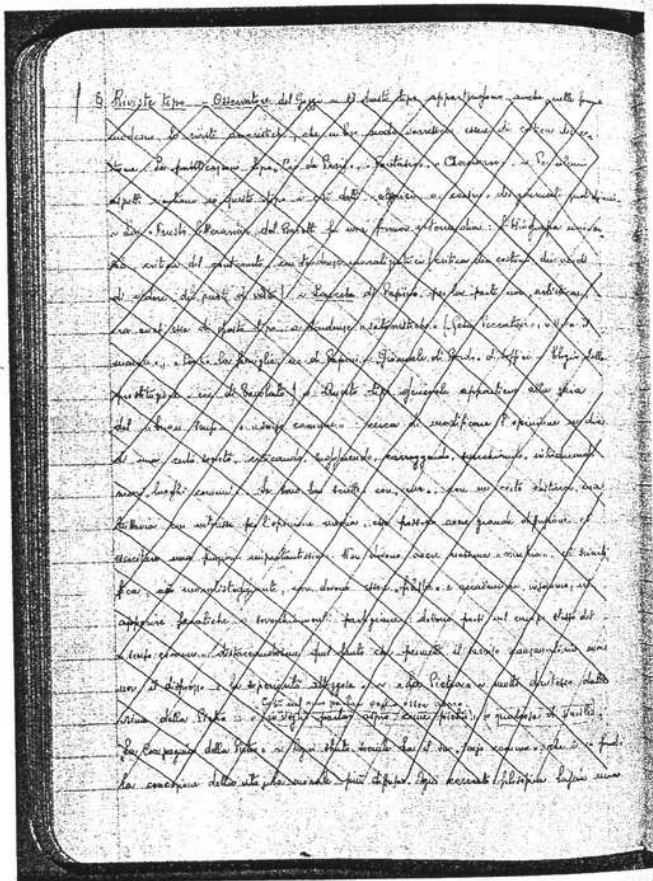
"A periodical, like a newspaper, a book, or any other medium of didactic expression that is aimed at a certain level of the reading or listening public, cannot satisfy everyone equally; not everyone will find it useful to the same degree. The important thing is that it serve as a stimulus for everyone; after all, no publication can replace the thinking mind."
Antonio Gramsci
(Prison Notebook 8)



www.gramsci-monument.com

August 12th, 2013 - Forest Houses, Bronx, NY

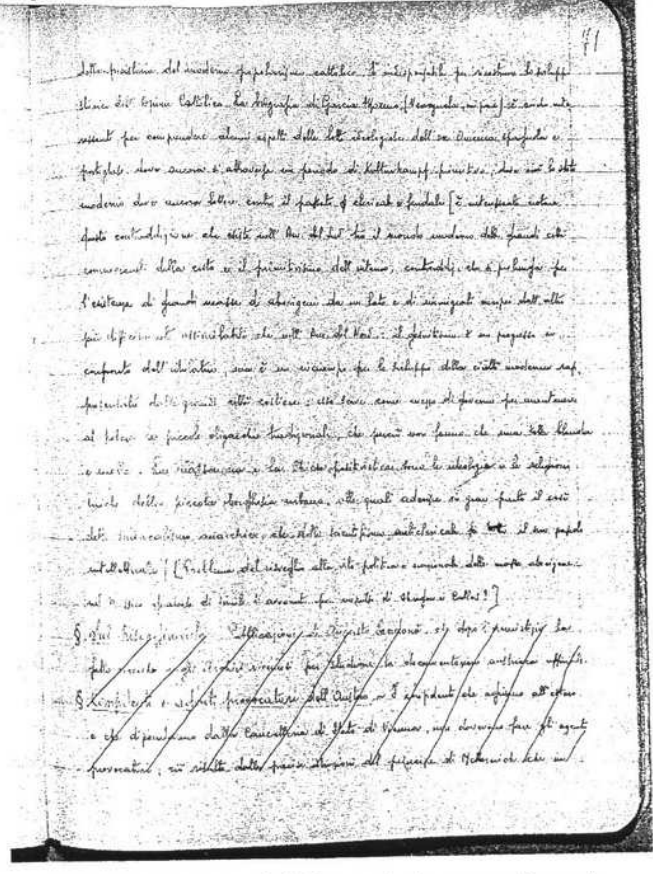
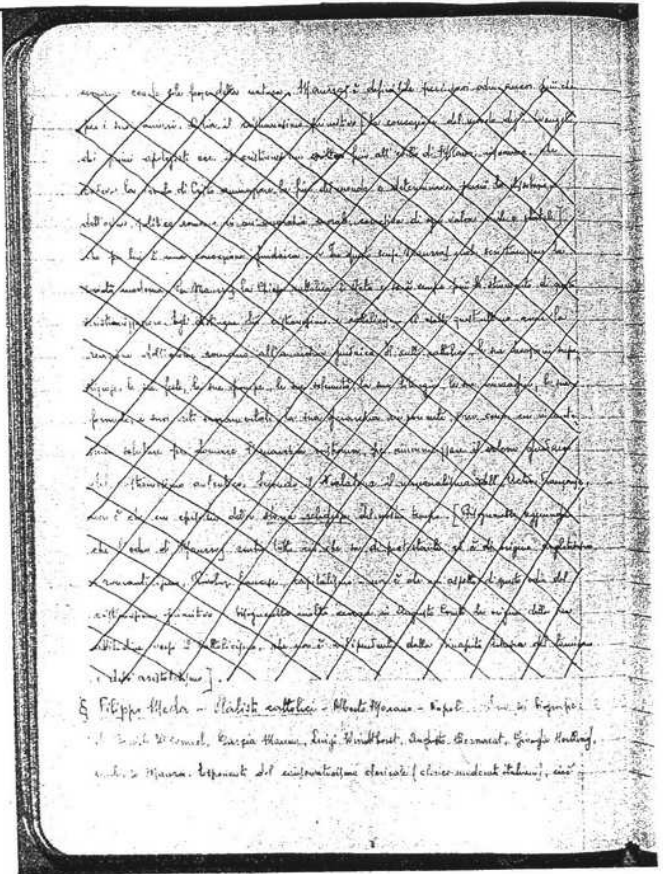
The Gramsci Monument-Newspaper is part of the "Gramsci Monument", an artwork by Thomas Hirschhorn, produced by Dia Art Foundation in co-operation with Erik Farmer and the Residents of Forest Houses



Pages 57 verso and 58 recto from the manuscript of Notebook 1. The contents of these pages correspond to §§66-67 and the opening line of §68 in the present edition. Gramsci canceled those notes which he rewrote or incorporated in lat-

er notebooks. The manuscript presents few problems of decipherment, the canceled portions of the text remain perfectly legible, and the writing is clear even when additions and corrections are inserted between lines or in the margin.

PAGES FROM ANTONIO GRAMSCI (PRISON NOTEBOOKS)



Pages 70 verso and 71 recto from the manuscript of Notebook 1. Their contents correspond to the conclusion of §106, all of §§107-108 and the opening lines of §109 in the present edition. With very few exceptions, each entry in the note-

books is preceded by the symbol §. The majority of notes start with an underlined phrase or word indicating the topics they address

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. COVER PAGE (GRAMSCI PRISON NOTEBOOK)

2. TABLE OF CONTENTS/WEATHER

3-7. A TEXT FROM RUPE SIMMS

8-9. A DAILY LECTURE WRITTEN BY MARCUS STEINWEG

10-12. POEM WRITTEN BY GEORGE OPPEN

13. POEM BY LANGSTON HUGHES

14. RESIDENT OF THE DAY

Bronx, NY 10456

Monday

Chance of Storm

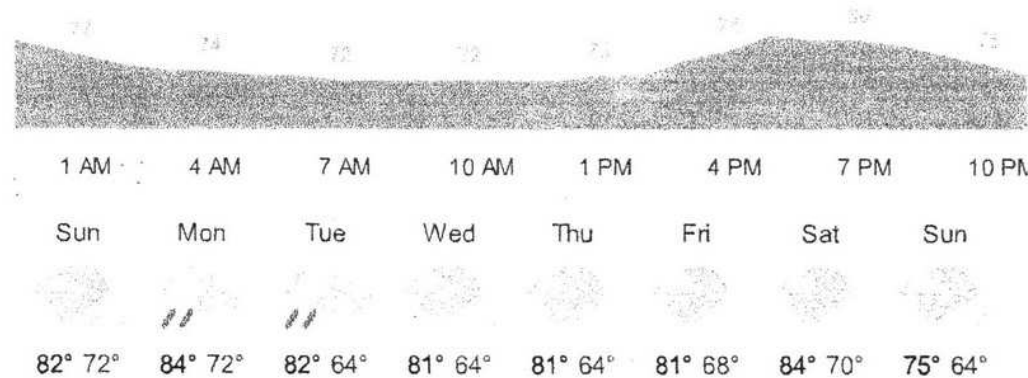
 **84** °F | °C

Precipitation: 30%

Humidity: 63%

Wind: 6 mph

Temperature	Precipitation	Wind
-------------	---------------	------



A TEXT FROM RUPE SIMMS

ANTONIO GRAMSCI: THE MAN AND HIS POLITICS,

Antonio Gramsci's reputation among the preeminent neo-Marxist scholars is immense. Christopher Hill eulogizes him, stating, he "may well be regarded as the greatest Marxist thinker since Lenin; certainly the greatest in Western Europe." Perhaps Gramsci's most remarkable contribution to Marxist theory lay in his challenge to the notion that politics is coercive by nature and in his dedication to the position that ideological instruction is essential to revolution. The following discussion amplifies these two foundational elements of Gramscian theory by offering a sketch of his biography followed by an overview of the most salient points of his philosophy.

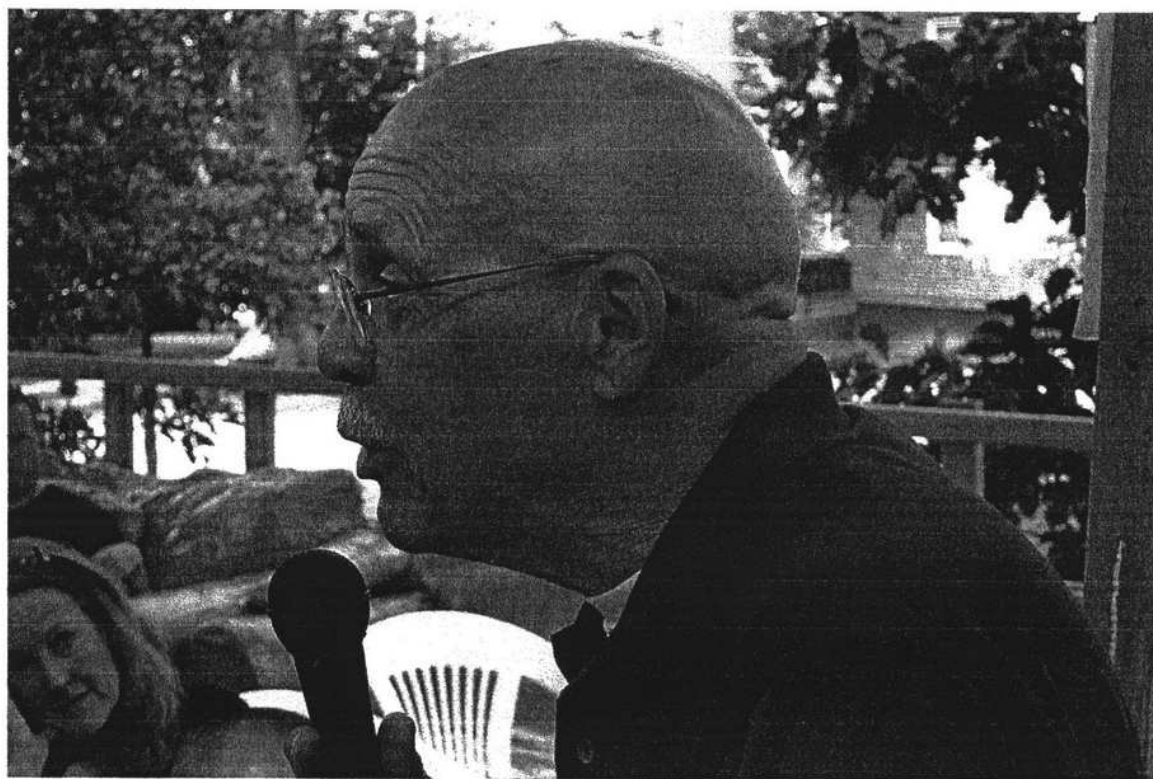
The Life and Ideological Production of Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937)

Gramsci was born at Ales on the island of Sardinia in 1891 as the fourth of seven children. During his early years, he was evidently influenced by the fact that Sardinia, his homeland, endured successive periods of colonialism under the domination of the Italian mainlanders. This made for a stressful youth--schooling was almost impossible and survival was always challenging. His father's arrest and the consequent loss of the family's primary source of income was one of the many misfortunes he endured as a young man. However, at the same time, he witnessed the realities of local political life: strikes and disorganized peasant revolts characterized Sardinian resistance, while local socialist intellectuals preached the need for working class solidarity. In reviewing the sociopolitical strife on the island during these years, Fiori describes the oppressed underclass as "stubborn individualists, reluctant to group together, even in self-defense, and too inclined to put up with what was bad for fear of something worse--like losing one's job. Their natural reaction to such resigned suffering was the riot, rather than any kind of disciplined patient struggle."¹

In 1911, as a young man of twenty-one, Gramsci traveled to the city of Turin on the mainland. There he broadened his intellectual interests, especially in the area of social theory, by gaining access to communist literature through his elder brother, Gennaro, an outspoken socialist. This early period foreshadowed his socialistic bent, revolutionary character, and peasant sympathies--salient points in the theory he developed later during years of incarceration.

While in Italy, Gramsci won a scholarship from Carlo Alberto College at the University of Turin. However, although he was at first a serious student, he later became increasingly involved in national politics, and this distracted him from his studies. After a time, he

¹ Giuseppe Fiori, *Antonio Gramsci: Life of a Revolutionary* (London: New Left Books, 1970), 34-35.



discontinued school and in 1914 joined the Turin section of the PSI (Partito Socialista Italiano) to become a full-time political activist and professional revolutionary. During this period, Gramsci developed an appreciation for the almost limitless influence of intellectuals on politics through their ability to shape culture.

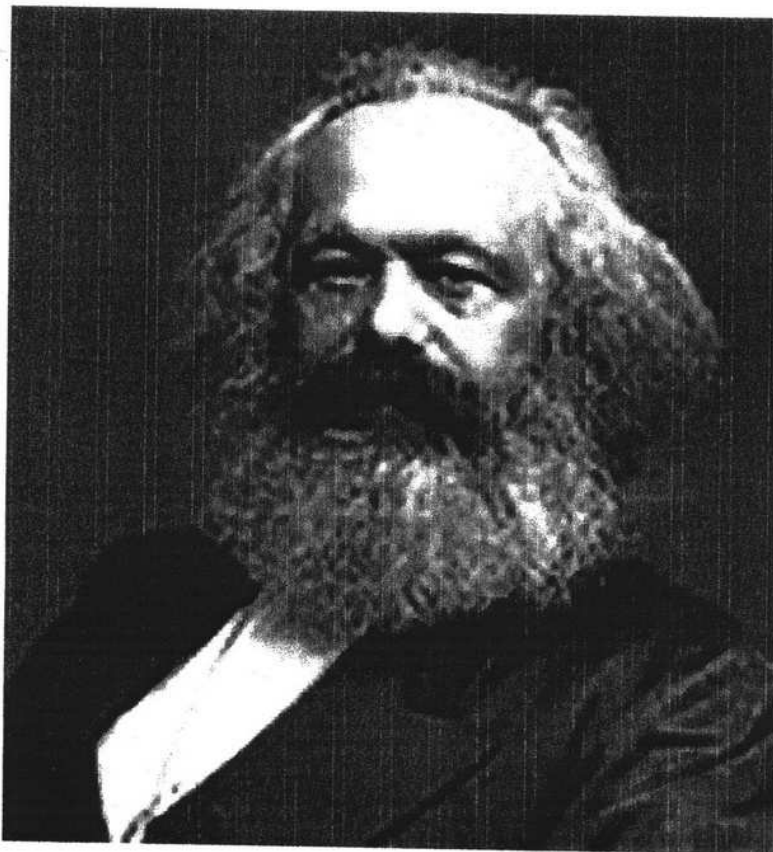
Later, as an avowed socialist, frequently contributing to newspapers and journals and forcefully debating his political opponents, Gramsci rose to the leadership of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) after serving as one of its founding members in 1921. As a dedicated theorist on the vanguard of the Communist movement, he published voluminously, contributing to the interpretation of history, philosophy, sociology, language, and literature from a Marxist standpoint. Throughout his career, he insisted that educating the masses was a long historical process, and he argued that a politically conscious working class was the foundation for the society of the future.

However, during the ascendancy of Mussolini (1883-1945), the Prime Minister of Italy between 1922 and 1943, the Fascists, who established themselves in Italy in 1922, grew progressively stronger, stabilizing their domination by passing repressive laws and mandating the liquidation of all other political parties. Gramsci, a deputy of the Italian Parliament in 1924, was arrested as an enemy of the state in 1926 and sentenced to a twenty-year prison term. He spent the balance of his life under miserable conditions writing his *Quaderni del Carcere* (Prison Notebooks) from a cell between 1929 and 1935. Finally, he died on April 27, 1937, from inadequate medical attention just five days after receiving an official pardon.

The Contribution of Gramsci to Marxism

As Gramsci matured as a socialist and observed the political developments of his day, he theorized that a Marxist strategy of revolution had to emphasize a subjective dynamic, a dynamic that traditional Marxism tended to minimize. According to Marx, economic factors are the driving forces of history; however, Gramsci argued that no revolution could be successful without maximizing the importance of culture, collective will, and voluntary cooperation. Gramsci never denied the essentiality of economics, but for him the notion that structure (economic base) determines the superstructure (ideas, religion, philosophy, and so on) was false: he insisted that a mutual relationship exists between the two.

Furthermore, at the point of class conflict, which Gramsci called "crisis in authority" and described as a situation in which "the ruling class has lost its consensus, i.e. is no longer 'leading'



Karl Marx

but only 'dominant,' exercising coercive force alone, this means precisely that the great masses have become detached from their traditional ideologies, and no longer believe what they used to believe previously"² In such a crisis, superstructural issues over-influence (but do not dictate) structural factors. Thus, the foremost issue was not the objective realities precipitating crisis, but instead the subjective, human response to them.

For Gramsci, history confirmed this observation as revealed in his comments on the Bolshevik Revolution. Here he departs from traditional Marxism with its emphasis on reductionism and economic determinism, stating:

This thought [Bolshevik ideology] sees as the dominant factor in history, not raw economic facts, but man, men in societies, men in relation to one another, reaching agreements with one another, developing through these contacts (civilization) a collective, social will; men coming to understand economic facts, judging them and adapting them to their will until this becomes the driving force of the economy and moulds objective reality, which lives and moves and comes to resemble a current of volcanic lava that can be channeled wherever and in whatever way men's will determines.³

Gramsci witnessed that in Turin in 1920, owing to the organization and collective effort of the working class, the capitalist system was on the verge of collapse. Mass strikes and open conflict made a proletariat takeover seem imminent; however, the movement crumbled. The revolutionaries were ideologically unprepared for victory. According to Gramsci, they had accepted the oppressive worldview of the ruling class and were without a critical imperative--a "cultural education." Fiori relates this idea to Gramsci's expansion of Marx:

Gramsci's originality as a Marxist lay . . . in his argument that the 'systems' real strength does not lie in the violence of the ruling class or the coercive power of its state apparatus, but in the acceptance by the ruled of a conception of the world which belongs to the rulers. The philosophy of the ruling class passes through a whole tissue of complex vulgarizations to emerge as common sense: that is, the philosophy of the masses, who accept the morality, the customs, the institutionalized rules of behavior of the society they live in.⁴

Similarly, Gramsci noted that, in spite of his efforts to teach the "revolutionary class" political consciousness, it supported Mussolini's fascist takeover and thereby deprived itself of democratic freedoms. In prison he pondered this contradiction and determined that revolutions

² Quintin Hoare, ed., *Antonio Gramsci: Selections from Political Writings (1910-1920)* (New York: International Publishers, 1977), 274-75.

³ *Ibid.*, 34-35.

⁴ Fiori, *Life of a Revolutionary*, 238.



Antonio Gramsci

are destined to fail if they depend solely on the inexorable laws of capitalism, as Marx had theorized.⁵ Thus, a socialist defeat of elite domination must be founded upon a revolutionary mass consciousness, accentuating the ideological and cultural dimensions of class and political struggle. Gramsci clarifies this point using the French Revolution as an illustration:

every revolution has been preceded by an intense labour of criticism, by the diffusion of culture and the spread of ideas amongst masses of men who are at first resistant, and think only of solving their own immediate economic and political problems for themselves, who have no ties of solidarity with others in the same condition. The latest example . . . is that of the French Revolution. . . . The Enlightenment was a magnificent revolution in itself and . . . it gave all Europe a bourgeois . . . unified consciousness, one which was sensitive to all the woes and misfortunes of the common people and which was the best possible preparation for the bloody revolt that followed in France.⁶

He continues this line of thought stating, "The bayonets of Napoleon's armies found their road already smoothed by an invisible army of books and pamphlets that had swarmed out of Paris from the first half of the eighteenth century and had prepared both men and institutions for the necessary renewal."⁷

This idea relates very directly to Gramsci moving away from Marx's "economicism" and arguing that multiple factors created what he referred to as a "historical bloc" (unity of structure and superstructure).⁸ As stated above, Marx believed that economic forces (structure) determined society's culture and ideas (superstructure). However, Gramsci theorized that interdependent elements of the structure and superstructure united to form a single way of life, that is, to form a given set of attitudes, worldviews, and systems of morality--the "historical bloc." This observation expanded Marx's analysis. It exposed the ruling order and its oppressive ideology as an enormous multi-layered system of domination that the exploited masses accepted uncritically as "common sense" (or what Gramsci also calls the "philosophy of non-philosophy"⁹). He explains this concept, stating that the "most fundamental characteristic [of "common sense"] is that it is a conception which, even in the brain of one individual, is fragmentary, incoherent and inconsequential, in conformity with the social and cultural position of those masses whose

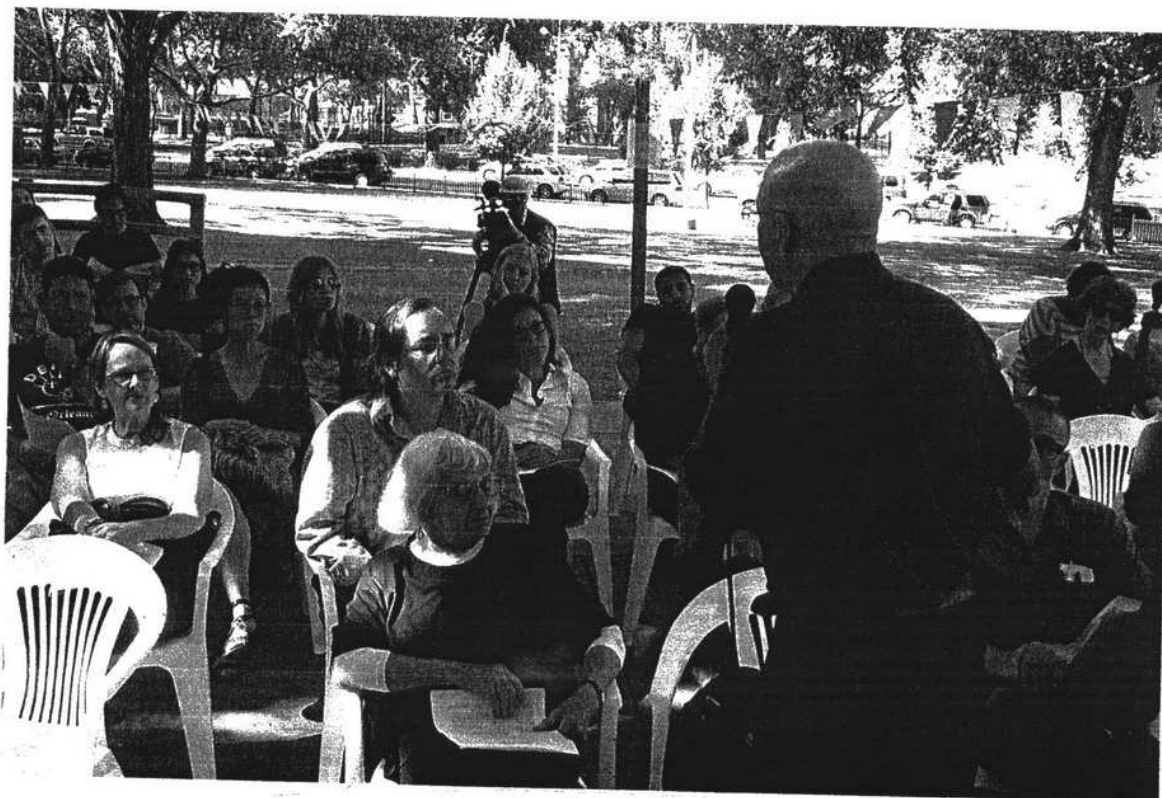
⁵ Carl Boggs, *The Two Revolutions: Gramsci and the Dilemmas of Western Marxism* (Boston: South End Press, 1984), 153-54.

⁶ Hoare, *Political Writings (1910-1920)* (1977), 12.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Quintin Hoare, *Selections from the Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 137.

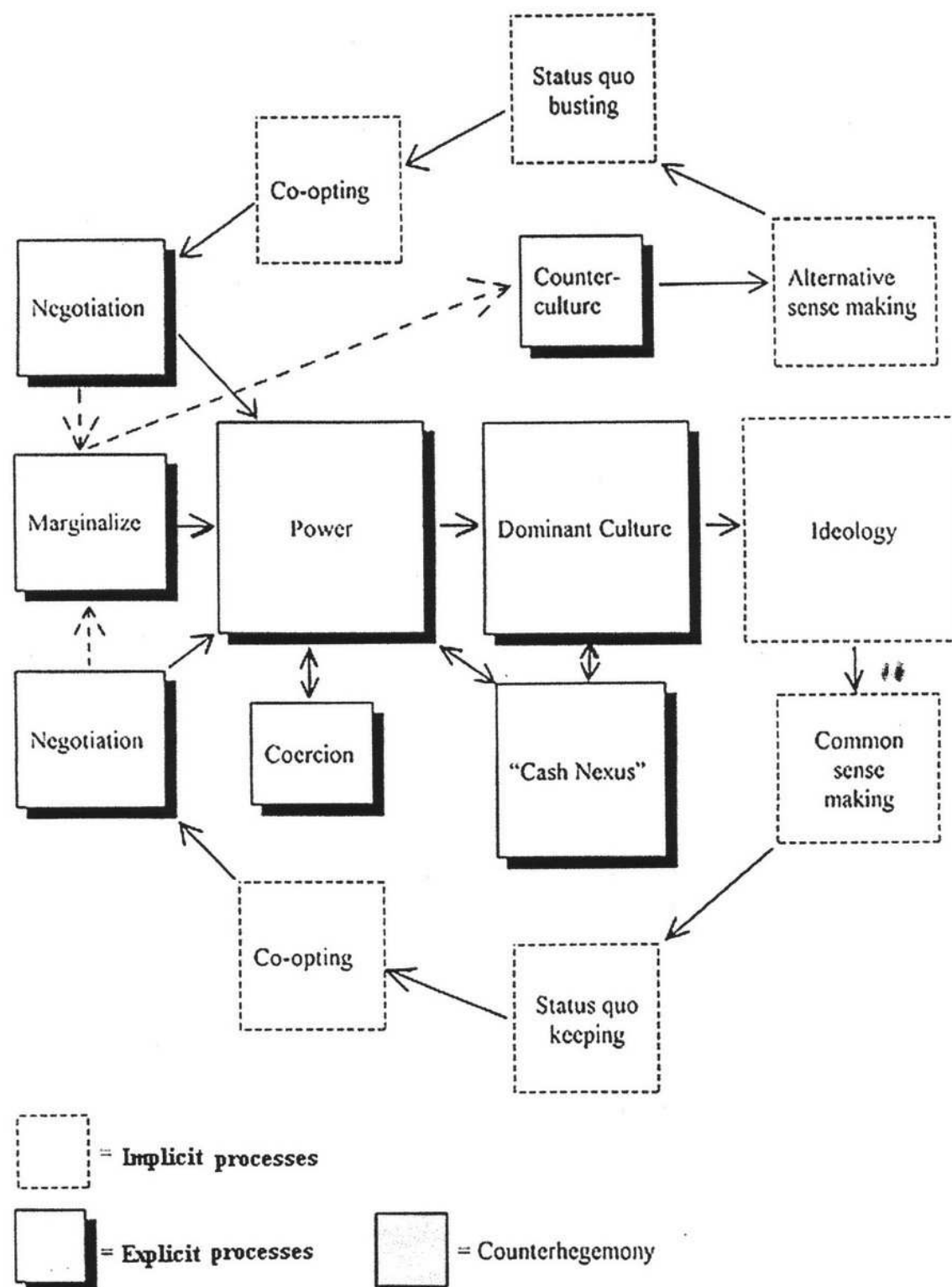
⁹ Ibid., p. 419.



Rupe Simms: Gramsci Seminar at "Gramsci Monument", 8.3.2013

philosophy it is."¹⁰ Gramsci's notion of the historical bloc and its internalization as a "non-philosophy" helps explain what he viewed as the durability and almost irresistible authority of the dominant order.

In sum, to the Italian theorist, traditional Marxism had unacceptably reduced culture to a direct reflection of economic forces. Gramsci repudiated this position arguing that it was simplistic and mechanistic and insisted instead that culture is semiautonomous and dramatically influential in shaping all aspects of social, economic, and political life. Thus, his preeminent contribution to Marxian thought resides in his non-deterministic interpretation of the relationship of structure to superstructure and in his introduction of consciousness, will, and consent as elements of critical importance to the analysis of power and domination.



TO BE CONTINUED IN ISSUE No. 44

A DAILY LECTURE

WRITTEN BY MARCUS STEINWEG

43rd Lecture at the Gramsci Monument, The Bronx, NYC: 12th August 2013
PHILOSOPHY OF LOVE
DURAS – BLANCHOT – NANCY
Marcus Steinweg

1. Love is about loving the absence of the beloved person.
2. Love is a feeling which relies on the absence rather than presence of the other, on the distance between the two lovers, on the rift which is their truth, their shared aporia.
3. Truth would be the name of an absolute unfamiliarity, and love would mean the opening towards the limit of the knowable in the experience of its ontological fragility.
4. The love that extends the self into the other and the other into the self, defines itself as „access to the inaccessible“,¹ as a touch of its untouchability: untouchability of the other as well as myself.²
5. Touch in which thought touches itself, „without being itself, coming to itself without self“, that is, without profiting from the stability of a substantial self.³
6. Because the touch retains an infinitesimal distance to what is touched, it happens by not happening. Instead of being a factual contact, it is a „tangency without contact“.⁴
7. Instead of taking possession of something or someone, it articulates itself as the impossibility of possession: „You hold nothing; you are unable to hold or retain anything, and that is precisely what you must love and know. That is what there is of a knowledge and a love. Love what escapes you. Love the one who goes. Love that he goes.“⁵
8. No encounter into which error wouldn't remain inscribed, no presence without absence.

9. No reference, to use another one of Blanchot's terms, which wouldn't be „rapport sans/without rapport“.⁶
10. To touch means to touch upon something vanishing, which, just like a ghost, eludes being touched.
11. Love exists solely as the love of ghosts.
12. Two subjects test their boundaries by dissolving themselves towards the boundlessness of the other.⁷
13. The other's presence always falters between presence and absence.
14. A ghost is there without being there and the other way around.
15. The same holds true for the loved one. Here and simultaneously elsewhere, ephemeral yet present.

¹ Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, trans. Richard Richardson and Anne O'Byrne, Stanford: Stanford University Press 2000. On the "accessibility of the inaccessible" see Nancy, *The Ground of the Image*, New York: Fordham University Press 2005.

² Cf. Jacques Derrida, *On Touching - Jean-Luc Nancy*, trans. Christine Irizarry, Stanford: Stanford University Press 2005.

³ Jean-Luc Nancy, *Corpus*, Paris: Éditions Métailié 2006.

⁴ Jean-Luc Nancy, *Noli Me Tangere*, trans. Sarah Clift, Pascale-Anne Brault, Michael Naas, Fordham University Press, 2008, p. 24.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 37

⁶ Cf. Maurice Blanchot, *The Unavowable Community*, trans. Pierre Jotis, New York: Barrytown Limited 2006. On this "monstrous contradiction (which refuses to accept the principle of non-inconsistency)" as a figure of a "non-dialectic description of intersubjectivity", which wants to correspond to the "radical asymmetry" of interpersonal relationships, in Blanchot and Levinas, see: Simon Critchley, *Ethics Politics Subjectivity*, London / New York 1999, p. 264

⁷ On love as indefinite reconnaissance of the other, to which the regulative factor of an impossible justice corresponds, cf. (besides the texts by Levinas and Derrida) Jean-Luc Nancy, *Just impossible*. Pétite conférence sur le juste et l'injuste. Paris 2007.

POEM WRITTEN BY GEORGE OPPEN "A NARRATIVE"

• A NARRATIVE

1

I am the father of no country
And can lie.

But whether mendacity
Is really the best policy. And whether

One is not afraid
To lie.

3

The constant singing
Of the radios, and the art

Of colored lights
And the perfumist

Are also art. But here

Parallel lines do not meet
And the compass does not spin, this is the interval

In which they do not, and events
Emerge on the bow like an island, mussels

Clinging to its rocks from which kelp

Grows, grass
And the small trees

Above the tide line
And its lighthouse

Showing its whitewash in the daylight

In which things explain each other,
Not themselves.

2

And truth? O,
Truth!

Attack
On the innocent

If all we have
Is time.

4

An enclave
Filled with their own
Lives, they said, but they disperse

Into their jobs,
Their 'circles,' lose connection
With themselves . . . How shall they know

Themselves, bony
With age?
This is our home, the planets

Move in it
Or seem to,
It is our home. Wolves may hunt

With wolves, but we will lose
Humanity in the cities
And the suburbs, stores

And offices
In simple
Enterprise.

5

It is a place.
Nothing has entered it.
Nothing has left it.
People are born

From those who are there. How have I forgotten . .

How have we forgotten
That which is clear, we
Dwindle, but that I have forgotten
Tortures me.

6

I saw from the bus,
Walked in fact from the bus station to see again
The river and its rough machinery
On the sloping bank—I cannot know

Whether the weight of cause
Is in such a place as that, tho the depth of water
Pours and pours past Albany
From all its sources.

8

But at night the park
She said, is horrible. And Bronk said
Perhaps the world
Is horror.
She did not understand. He meant
The waves or pellets
Are thrown from the process
Of the suns and like radar
Bounce where they strike. The eye
It happens
Registers
But it is dark.
It is the nature
Of the world:
It is as dark as radar.

9

The lights
Shine, the fire
Glow in the fallacy
Of words. And one may cherish
Invention and the invented terms
We act on. But the park
Or the river at night
She said again
Is horrible.

7

Serpent, Ouroboros
Whose tail is in his mouth: he is the root
Of evil,
This ring worm, the devil's
Doctrine the blind man
Knew. His mind
Is its own place;
He has no story. Digested

And digesting—Fool object,
Dingy medallion
In the gutter
Of Atlantic Avenue!
Let it alone! It is deadly.
What breath there is
In the rib cage we must draw
From the dimensions

Surrounding, whether or not we are lost
And choke on words.

10

Some of the young men
Have become aware of the Indian,
Perhaps because the young men move across the continent
Without wealth, moving one could say
On the bare ground. There one finds the Indian

Otherwise not found. Wood here and there
To make a village, a fish trap in a river,
The land pretty much as it was.

And because they also were a people in danger,
Because they feared also the thing might end,
I think of the Indian songs . . .
'There was no question what the old men were singing'
The anthropologist wrote,

Aware that the old men sang
On those prairies,
Return, the return of the sun.

11

River of our substance
Flowing
With the rest. River of the substance
Of the earth's curve, river of the substance
Of the sunrise, river of silt, of erosion, flowing
To no imaginable sea. But the mind rises

Into happiness, rising

Into what is there. I know of no other happiness
Nor have I ever witnessed it. . . . Islands
To the north

In polar mist
In the rather shallow sea—
Nothing more

But the sense
Of where we are

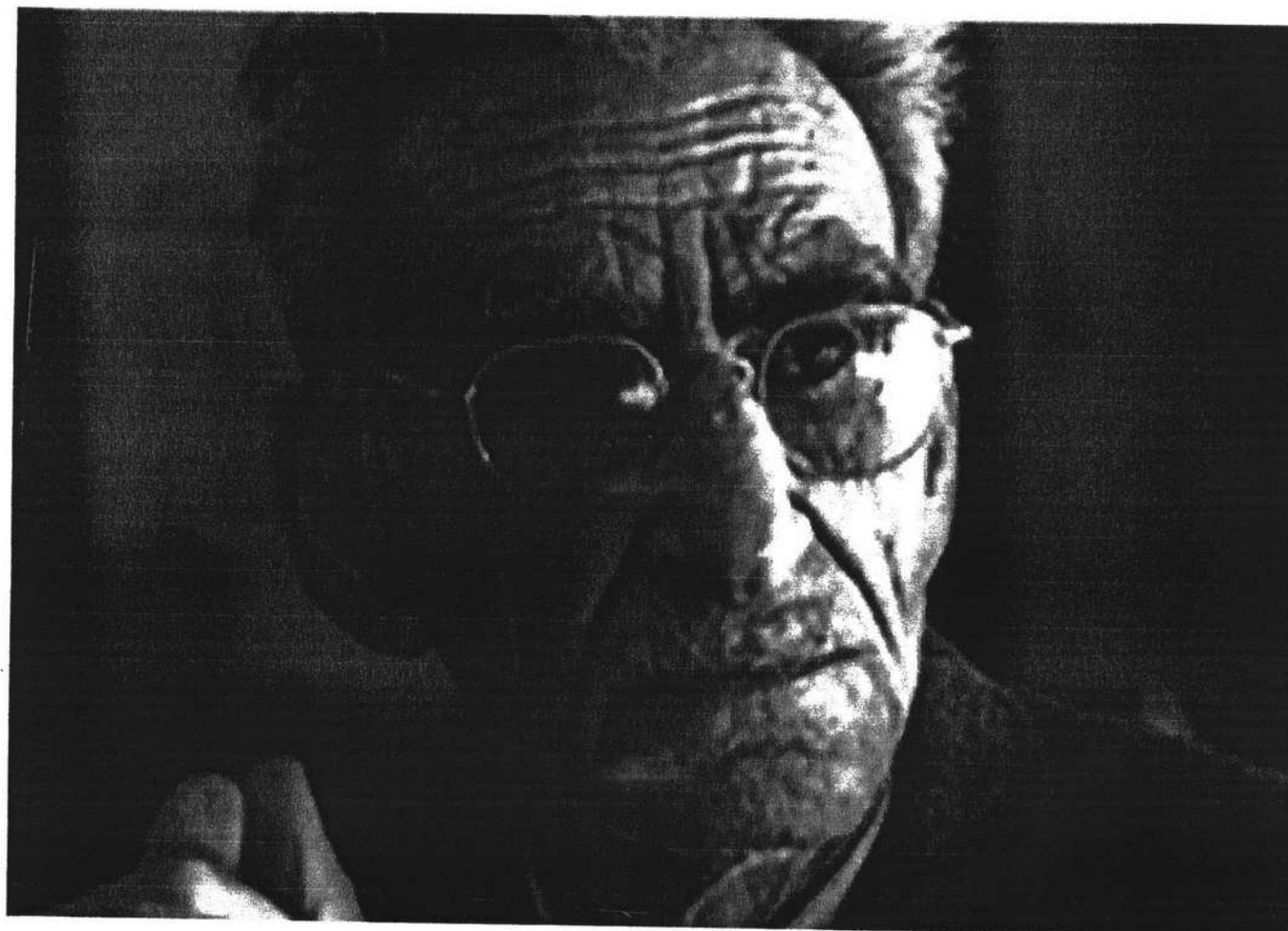
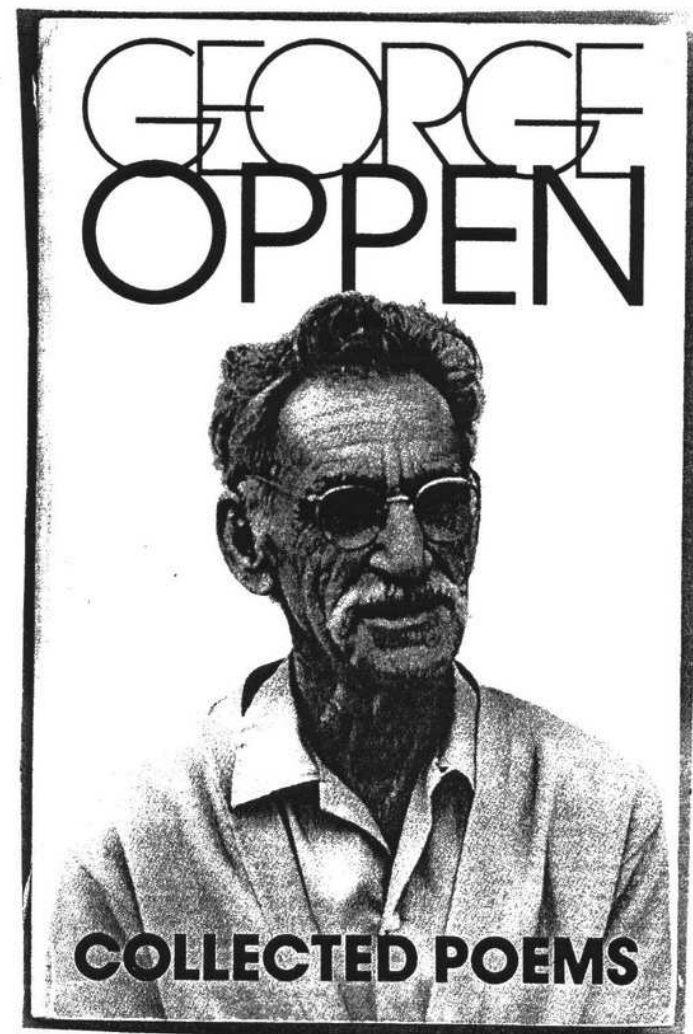
Who are most northerly. The marvel of the wave
Even here is its noise seething
In the world; I thought that even if there were nothing

The possibility of being would exist;
I thought I had encountered

Permanence; thought leaped on us in that sea
For in that sea we breathe the open
Miracle

Of place, and speak
If we would rescue
Love to the ice-lit

Upper World a substantial language
Of clarity, and of respect.



GEORGE OPPEN

A POEM WRITTEN BY LANGSTON HUGHES

I, too, sing America.

by Langston Hughes

**I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.**

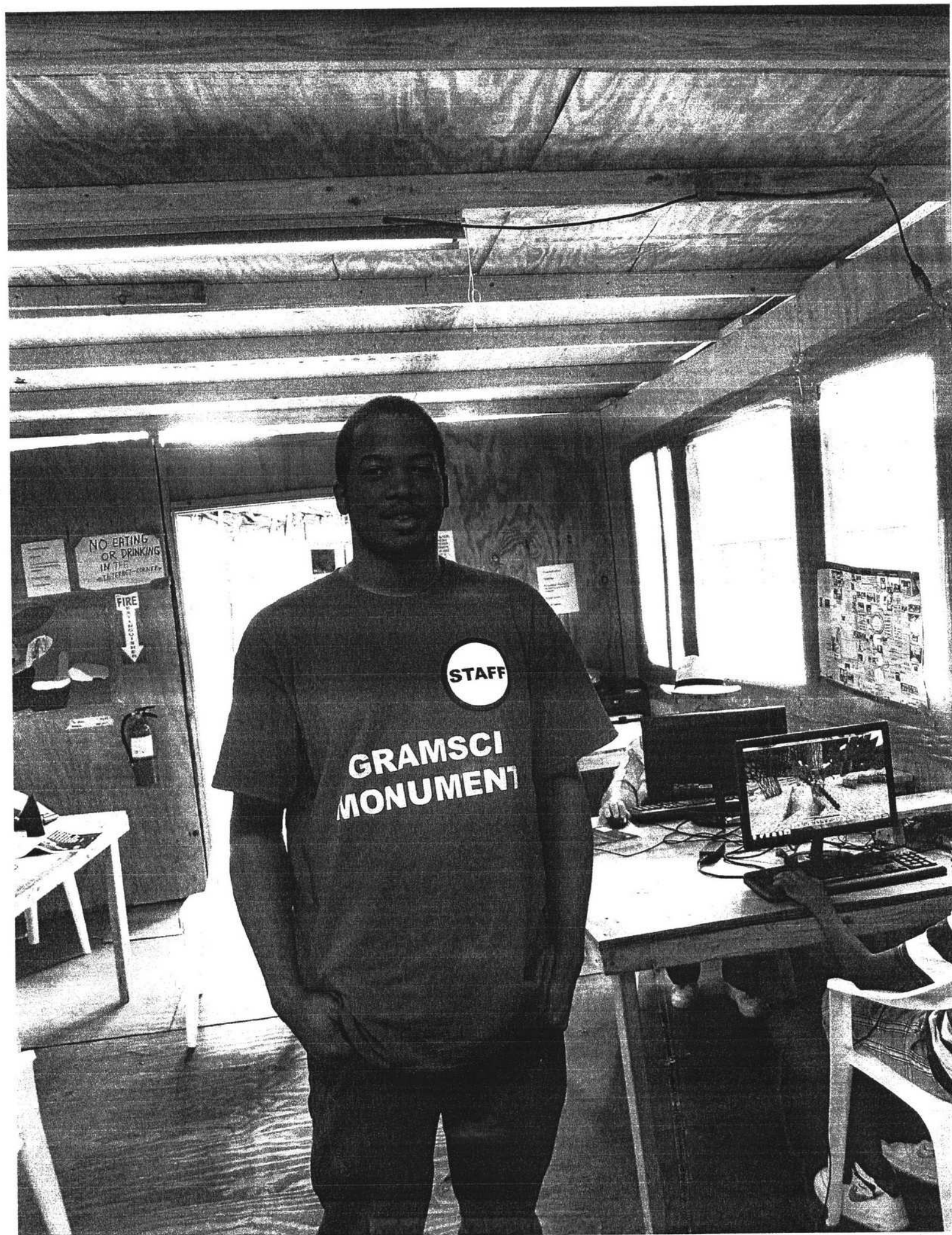
**Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.**

**Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed--
I, too, am America.**



Langston Hughes (1 February 1902 – 22 May 1967 / Missouri)

RESIDENT OF THE DAY



KHOREY BROWN